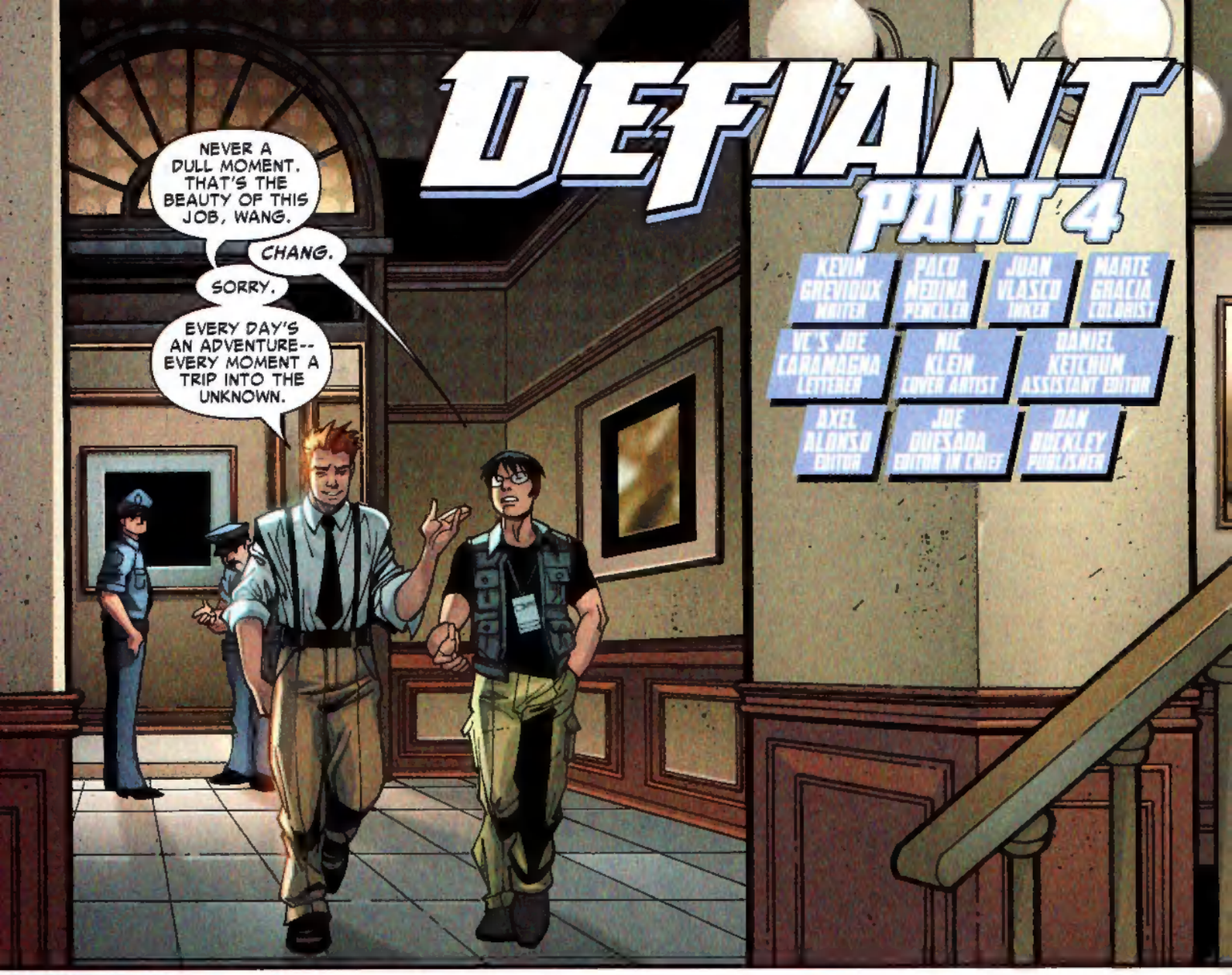
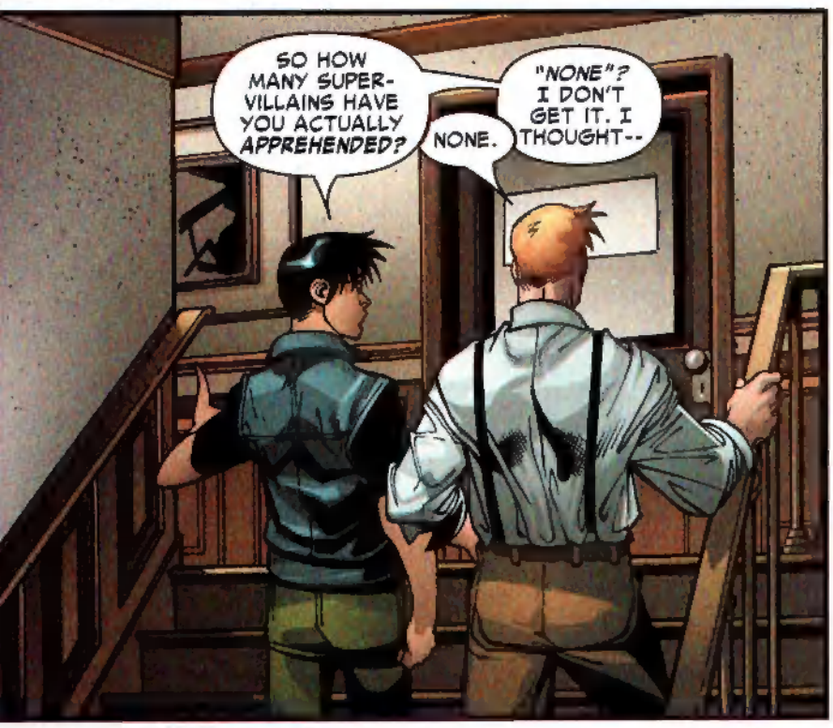

DEFIANT
PART 4
KEVIN GREVIOUX WRITER
PACO MEDINA PENCILER
JUAN VLASCO INKER
MARTE GRACIA COLORIST
VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA LETTERER
NIC KLEIN COVER ARTIST
DANIEL KETCHUM ASSISTANT EDITOR
AXEL ALONSO EDITOR
JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER
NEVER A DULL MOMENT. THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF THIS JOB, WANG.
CHANG.
SORRY.
EVERY DAY'S AN ADVENTURE--EVERY MOMENT A TRIP INTO THE UNKNOWN.


SO HOW MANY SUPER-VILLAINS HAVE YOU ACTUALLY APPREHENDED?
NONE.
"NONE"? I DON'T GET IT. I THOUGHT--

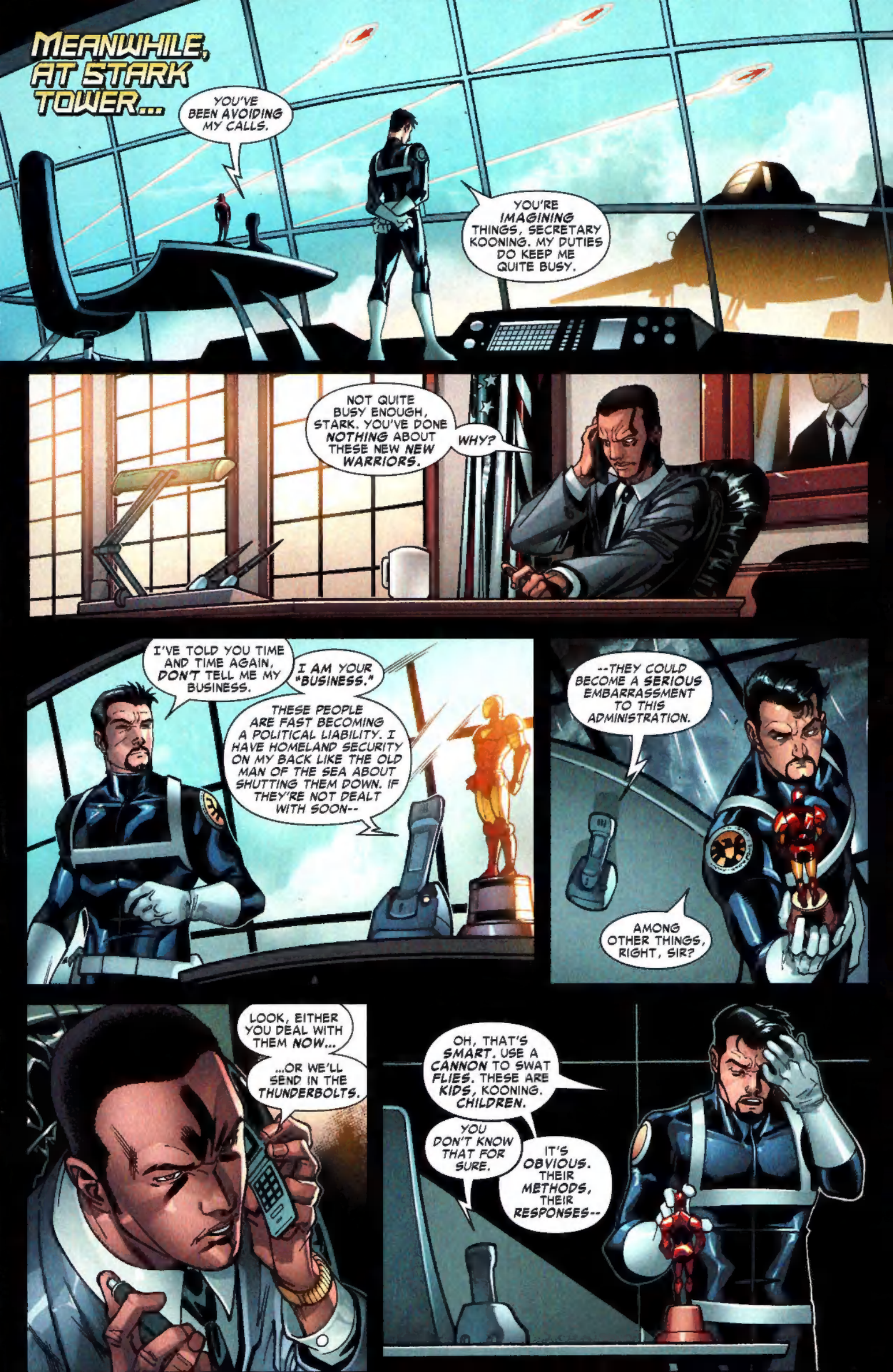
THAT'S NOT HOW WE DO THINGS HERE AT "LAW & ORDER: COSTUMED DIVISION." THAT'S STARK'S BAILIWICK. WE BUILD THE CASE, S.H.I.E.L.D. GIVES THE CHASE. THAT'S HOW IT WORKS.

SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN. I WONDER WHAT SURPRISE WE'LL GET TODAY?
WHAT THE--?

NOT A WORD, GRANVILLE... NOT A FREAKING WORD!
TOY COPS
WHAT'S SURPRISING IS THAT YOUR ASSAILANT DIDN'T REALLY USE ACTUAL PYM PARTICLES AT ALL. THE MOLECULE IS CLOSE, BUT NOT THE SAME AS THE ONES I DISCOVERED...
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, IT REMINDS ME OF A FORMULA BILL FOSTER CREATED WHEN I WAS STUCK AT GIANT-SIZE ONCE.
BILL...
Uh... DOC...? YOU ALRIGHT?
JUST A SEC...
ANYWAY, WHOEVER SYNTHESIZED THIS IS A VERITABLE GENIUS.
HOW DID THIS HAPPEN, ANYWAY?
IT WAS NIGHT THRASHER. GOT THE DROP ON US IN THE PRECINCT PARKING LOT, IF YOU CAN BELIEVE THAT.

"NIGHT THRASHER"? I THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD.
THEN WE'RE IN THE FLIPPIN' TWILIGHT ZONE, 'CAUSE WE KNOW WHAT WE SAW.
Y'KNOW SOMETHING, GIVENS? THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOUR SIZE MATCHES THAT PEA BRAIN O'YOURS. A SHAME YOUR MOUTH DIDN'T SHRINK TO MATCH.
YOU KNOW THE WORST PART ABOUT BEING THIS SIZE, GRANVILLE?
YOUR BREATH SMELLS LIKE A CAVE FULL OF HOT BAT--
OKAY, WE'RE READY.
25
PSSSSSSSS
THIS CAN BE A BIT DISORIENTING...
+COUGH+
+COUGH+

EASY.
OOO...I'M ALRIGHT.
GRANVILLE, YOU GET THAT INFORMATION I REQUESTED?
RIGHT HERE.
WHAT IS IT, BEV?
ACCORDING TO THIS, THERE HAVE BEEN *NINE COMPANIES* THAT HAVE RECORDED LARGE MOVEMENTS OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT IN THE PAST YEAR. AND ALL OF THEM ORIGINATE FROM OFFSHORE COMPANIES.
WELL, WE *KNEW* THAT WAS A POSSIBILITY.
BUT WHAT WE DIDN'T KNOW IS THAT THOSE COMPANIES ARE ALL *WAKANDACORP SUBSIDIARIES*. REMEMBER NIGHT THRASHER'S VIBRANIUM-MESH SUIT?
uh-oh.


MEANWHILE, AT STARK TOWER...
YOU'VE BEEN AVOIDING MY CALLS.
YOU'RE IMAGINING THINGS, SECRETARY KOONING. MY DUTIES DO KEEP ME QUITE BUSY.
NOT QUITE BUSY ENOUGH, STARK. YOU'VE DONE NOTHING ABOUT THESE NEW NEW WARRIORS.
WHY?
I'VE TOLD YOU TIME AND TIME AGAIN, DON'T TELL ME MY BUSINESS.
I AM YOUR "BUSINESS."
THESE PEOPLE ARE FAST BECOMING A POLITICAL LIABILITY. I HAVE HOMELAND SECURITY ON MY BACK LIKE THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA ABOUT SHUTTING THEM DOWN. IF THEY'RE NOT DEALT WITH SOON--
--THEY COULD BECOME A SERIOUS EMBARRASSMENT TO THIS ADMINISTRATION.
AMONG OTHER THINGS, RIGHT, SIR?
LOOK, EITHER YOU DEAL WITH THEM NOW...
...OR WE'LL SEND IN THE THUNDERBOLTS.
OH, THAT'S SMART. USE A CANNON TO SWAT FLIES. THESE ARE KIDS, KOONING. CHILDREN.
YOU DON'T KNOW THAT FOR SURE.
IT'S OBVIOUS. THEIR METHODS, THEIR RESPONSES--

I DON'T CARE IF THEY'RE POWER PACK, THE MOUSEKETEERS OR THE ORIGINAL GANG FROM LITTLE RASCALS! I WANT THEM STOPPED IMMEDIATELY BEFORE WE HAVE ANOTHER STAMFORD ON OUR HANDS!
USE YOUR HEAD. IF YOU USE ANYTHING OTHER THAN A PLANNED PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MEASURED RESPONSE, YOU'LL HAVE A PUBLIC BACKLASH WORSE THAN WACO ON YOUR HANDS.
YOU WANT ME TO DO MY JOB? THEN YOU DO THINGS MY WAY OR--
HEH-HEH.
WHAT? I AMUSE YOU?
QUITE FRANKLY. YES.
YOU WEAR A HIGH HAT, STARK. IN FACT, WITHOUT THE MOUSTACHE YOU'D ALMOST REMIND ME OF OL' HONEST ABE LINCOLN.
ALMOST.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
THE TROUBLE WITH HIGH HATS:
THEY TEND TO FALL OFF WHEN THE WIND BLOWS OR YOU WALK TOO FAST.
IS THAT A THREAT?
JUST AN OBSERVATION.
DON'T DISAPPOINT ME.
CLICK

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS. EIGHT AGAINST ONE??
I DON'T THINK CAPTAIN AMERICA COULD'VE MADE THAT MOVE.
YOU'RE TRIPPIN', KAZ. BUT HE DOES HAVE MAD SKILLS.
"OUCH. SOMEBODY'S GOING TO NEED A ROOT CANAL."
"WELL, THAT'S ANOTHER ONE DOWN."
"NICE MOVE!"
"ONE TO GO."
"LIKE HE SAID, 'POWERS GET IN THE WAY.'"
"WELL THAT'S A WRAP.
"ALL IN UNDER A MINUTE."

PATHETIC.
YOU HIT ME WHEN MY BACK WAS TURNED!
EASY, SIS...
THAT'S THE POINT, LONGSTRIKE.
YOU THINK DOC OCK, NITRO OR COUNT NEFARIA IS GOING TO TAP YOU ON THE SHOULDER AND FIGHT FAIR?
WE'RE JUST NOT USED TO THIS EQUIPMENT YET.
YEAH, FLYING FEELS KIND OF STRANGE WITHOUT MY NORMAL WINGS. THESE ANTI-GRAVITY DISCS DON'T GIVE ME THE SAME SENSE OF CONTROL.
YOU KNOW, WE COULD ALWAYS TRADE, ANGEL.
BUT I THINK I LIKE YOU AS "MS. FIRE AND ICE." MAKES THINGS INTERESTING.
YOU'RE SWEET.

REPLACING YOUR NATURAL MUTANT ABILITIES WITH TECHNOLOGICAL ONES IS *NOT* EASY, ANGEL. I NEVER SAID IT WAS. BUT YOU HAVE TO MAKE THE ADJUSTMENT. AND THAT GOES FOR *ALL* OF YOU. YOUR *LIVES* DEPEND ON IT.
I DON'T KNOW HOW THE *STILT-MAN* EVER USED THESE THINGS. THEY MAKE ME *DIZZY.*
HE *PRACTICED.* AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO ALL DAY, *EVERY DAY,* IF WE HAVE TO. STARTING *TODAY.*
TODAY??
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
BUT WE WERE GONNA HANG OUT--
NOT ANYMORE.
EVERYONE TRAINS *DOUBLE SESSIONS* UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.
I'M GETTING SICK OF THAT DUDE.
WONDRA. FRONT AND CENTER.
WONDRA

FLUID MOTIONS... FLAWLESS TIMING... IMPECCABLE TEAMWORK...
I NEVER GAVE RICHARDS MUCH CREDIT AS A TACTICIAN, GIVEN THAT HE WAS A SCIENTIST, BUT HE KNEW EXACTLY HOW TO USE EACH MEMBER'S POWER TO ITS FULLEST EXTENT, TURNING EVEN THEIR WEAKNESSES INTO STRENGTHS.
IF YOU'RE WONDERING ABOUT SOFIA, NO PUN INTENDED, BUT SHE'S *IN THE WIND.* FOR GOOD.
SHE'LL BE BACK.
HOW DO *YOU* KNOW?
JUST LIKE I KNEW WITH THE REST OF YOU: IT'S IN HER *BLOOD.*
BUT THAT'S NOT WHY YOU WANTED TO TALK...
I KNOW THEY'RE YOUR FRIENDS, BUT YOU NEED MORE OF AN *IRON FIST* WITH THE TEAM.
I LEFT YOU IN CHARGE OF TRAINING. THEY SHOULD BE FURTHER ALONG THAN THIS. NOT JUST FOR THE *WAR ROOM*, BUT *REAL COMBAT.*

TERROR IN DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN!
THIS IS THE SCENE DOWNTOWN JUST MINUTES AGO WHERE THE INITIATIVE HEROES ARE TRYING TO STOP THE GROUP OF SUPER-VILLAINS BELIEVED TO BE THE ZODIAC.
TELL EVERYONE TO GEAR UP.
YOU MEAN--?
THAT'S RIGHT. WE'RE TAKING A FIELD TRIP.

--HAS TURNED OUT BADLY FOR THE NEW INITIATIVE HEROES. A CALL HAS GONE OUT TO THE AVENGERS TO QUELL THE SITUATION AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, BUT AS OF YET, THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE!
FUGEDDABOUTIT. THEY COME DOWN HERE, WE'LL PELT 'EM WIT A COUPLE O' AL'S CANNOLIS.
THEY HIT LIKE THOR'S HAMMER, AIN'T THAT RIGHT, AL?
BOTH O'YOUSE MOTHERS.
CHEESE AND RICE! THAT'S RIGHT DOWN THE STREET!
HERE YOU GO, GUYS...ONE WESTERN OMELET WITH WHEAT TOAST AND BACON...
...AND A SHORT STACK OF JOHNNYCAKES WITH LINKS AND TWO OVER EASY.
YOU GUYS NEED ANYTHING ELSE, YOU JUST LET ME KNOW.
WHAT AM I, SEEIN' THINGS OVA' HERE?
IS THIS THE SAME SOFIA WHO USE TA RUN LATE AND BREAK ALL MY DISHES?
WHAT, I CAN'T DO MY JOB LIKE THE "FIRST CLASS" WAITRESS THAT I AM?
AND I WANT A RAISE TOO.
YOU TELL 'IM, KID.
NOW TELL 'IM TA CHANGE THE MENU ONCE OR TWICE A DECADE. HE'S BEEN MAKIN' THE SAME SLOP SINCE THE GIANTS WON THE SUPER BOWL.
THIRTEEN UP!
CHILD, WHAT DONE GOT INTO YOU?
BEEN GOING THROUGH A LOT LATELY. BUT...I THINK I'VE GOT IT COVERED.

REALLY? ANYTHING YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT? 'CAUSE, GIRL, YOU KNOW I DON'T MIND GETTIN' IN SOMEBODY'S BUSINESS.
LOOK, MY HEAD WAS SCREWED UP FOR A MINUTE. FATHER ISSUES. LIVING ON MY OWN. NOT SURE ABOUT THE FUTURE OR [redacted] MY LIFE WAS HEADED, BUT THAT'S OVER NOW.
I'M GOOD. REALLY.
THINGS ARE FINALLY STARTING TO LOOK UP.
OKAY, IF YOU SAY--
KE-RASH!!

AL's diner
Y-YOU ALRIGHT...?
+COUGH+ I THINK SO.
IS EVERYBODY OKAY?
NOBODY MOVE--I'LL CALL 911!
HEY KID, WHERE YOU GOIN'??
GET BACK HERE!
SOFIA

STARK WAS A FOOL TO SEND THESE *CHILDREN* TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT EVEN THE AVENGERS COULD NOT DO.
BUT NO MATTER, ONCE THE *NEW ZODIAC* COMPLETES THE CIRCLE, [redacted] WILL FINALLY HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO SH[redacted] THE WORLD.

NOW THAT THE EARTH IS ALIGNED WITH MERCURY, LET THE POWER OF THE STARS REVEAL TO US THE LOCATION OF *BAAL ABIB!*

Uh... CONNELLY...I THINK WE'RE IN TROUBLE--

BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM
WHAT THE--?

GOOD SHOT, PHASER.
ALRIGHT PEOPLE-- COMM-LINKS ON--
REMEMBER YOUR TRAINING-- HIT HARD, FAST, WATCH EACH OTHER'S BACK--
--AND LET'S DO WHAT WE DO.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE
WONDRA, TAKE THE BIG ONE. I NEED HIM OUT OF THE WAY.
NO PROB, THRASH--

SPLASH
I'M ON IT.
WHAM
DECIBEL, GRAB THE FEDS. GET THEM TO SAFETY.
WH-WHAT'S HAPPENING--?
TAKE IT EASY. I'VE GOT YOU.
TEMPEST, I NEED AN ICE SHIELD TO PROTECT THE CIVILIANS.
ROGER THAT.
AAAAAARGH!
I GOT THE CRAB LADY--
YOU OKAY, ANGEL?

FINE, SWEETIE.
JUST GIVING ARIES HERE A GOOD OL' FASHIONED HOTFOOT!
FWOOOOOSH
STILL ALIVE, NIGHT THRASHER?
YOU'LL WISH YOU'D HAVE STAYED DEAD.
WHATEVER.
SWAK
ATTA BOY, JONO!
STUBBORN BLOKE.
CHOK

ARE THESE CLOWNS OVERRATED OR WHAT?
KRAAAAAK
MAYBE THE INITIATIVE SHOULD JOIN THE NEW WARRIORS.
ZAAAAPP
COULD Y'ALL HUSH UP??
BRRRRRRAPP!
BRRRRRRAPP!
THIS AIN'T NO GAME...
BRRRRRRAPP!
BRRRRRRAPP!

HEY! I THINK I'M GETTING THE HANG OF IT.
WHAK
WHAK
LONGSTRIKE! KEEP FOCUSED!
THIS HAS GONE ON LONG ENOUGH--
BA-WHOOM!
YOU SHOULD HAVE READ YOUR HOROSCOPE TODAY, GIRL...

...THEN YOU WOULD HAVE KNOWN TO BEWARE OF CANCER.
NOOOOOOO!
NO...
...NOT AGAIN...
TO BE CONTINUED...
factory
Coffee